Calm Down Buddy! It’s Just a Game: Behavioral Patterns Observed among Teamwork MMO Players in WARGAMING’s World of Tanks

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Author keywords: Massively Multiplayer Online Games, MMO, World of Tanks, WOT, WARGAMING, Virtual Behavior, Teamwork

This study examines (also develops) several scenarios in a massively multiplayer online game, World of Tanks, in order to observe player’s response to the occurred/created stimuli in different situations. World of Tanks has been developed by a Belarusian-Cypriot company called WARGAMING. In 2011, the game set a Guinness record for most players online simultaneously in one server. According to the GameSpot, in 2014, WARGAMING reported over 75 million registered users and 1.1 million concurrent players only for their World of Tanks game. The Asia server of World of Tanks that includes Southeast Asian, Australian, and New Zealand players is the main target of this study.

A qualitative approach through observation and experience is employed to study the behavior of team players in the real situations, although occurring in a virtual environment. World of Tanks offers various scenarios, which are mostly involved with teamwork activities. Being a tiered and ranked based game, also exposing players’ statistics to each other, the games has provided an environment where stats are becoming more important than the game itself for many players. In this situation sometimes the fun part of the game is victimized by the above attitude, leading to bullying, humiliation, verbal abuse, and deliberate friendly fire. However the level of these behaviors varies from a scenario to another.

Additionally some other behavioral patterns observed during the experience are discussed in this study, which reflect the real world semi-similar scenarios or situations in a virtual environment. For example helping the other team members in a time of need or taking personal advantages rather than assisting others.

This study is a phenomenological case study using symbolic interactionism, interpretivism, and phenomenology as theoretical perspective through direct and indirect observation while experiencing the phenomenon being investigated. A constructionism epistemology is used in order to construct knowledge about the above phenomenon.

Data is collected using an existing WARGAMING’s World of Tanks account mainly from the real scenarios (battles). However, this game offers various features such as online chat, statistics, and several associated websites where users can share their experience/thoughts in many different forms from text to interactive multimedia. These sources of data are also used in this study.

This study looks at various scenarios to investigate the factors influencing the players’ behavior in occurrence of the mentioned events in order to develop a pattern for some of them where applicable. This study aims not to criticize the observed behavior but to study the reasons behind it. Therefore study takes no side neither encouraging nor discouraging the behavior. However a brief discussion is provided in the conclusion arguing over the possibility of reflection of this behavior in the real world scenarios, vice versa.
Developing a Narrative Experience in a Post-Media Environment
Kenneth Feinstein and James Morris (#34)

Author keywords: Digital Live Performances, Virtual Storytelling, Digital Humanities, Post-cinema, Augmented Reality, Museum Display, Installation, New Media Theory, Lev Manovich, Vilem Flusser, Siegfried Zeilinski, Software theory

We will be looking at the conceptual and technical development of a museum display, Temporal Chaos. This is a work in progress. We will lay out the conceptual framework within which this project was developed. What is our understanding of our relationship to media and how does that effect how we think through it? We will look at the theoretical underpinnings of the work and see how they determined the actual object. We will investigate how we interact with media and how innovation finds its way forward.

We will investigate how media theory approaches these issues and how this is reflected in practice. Lev Manovich looks at the relationship of software to the work as having developed through a deterministic framework. Combining structuralism and Clement Greenberg’s concepts on the nature of modern art, Manovich sees the nature of computer art as having to be self-reflexive. The software and its programming determines what can be done through the medium and as such what can be said. In contrast, Vilem Flusser sees our relationship with technology as playful, and that we fundamentally need to push against the boundaries of the software to keep our relationship with technology alive. More recently Manovich has extended his work to include the idea that technologies are created to fit the world views of their creators. That the software levels all differences in media, that there is now only one medium, not several media. Here he comes closer to what Flusser wrote in his analysis of photography and the emerging new media. Flusser sees the changes as a challenge to the creator and the viewer asking for a radically dynamic relationship. For him the relationship is one where users act with technology to extend the rules of how the technology works. Both views are asking us to look at how we can extend our relationship with each other and technology through the application of software.

Taking form Manovich, Flusser and also Siegfried Zeilinski’s manifesto Vademecum for the Prevention of psychopathia medialis, we are looking at how we can create human interactions with history and time through technology. The challenge posed by these theorists is how does one interact with technology in terms of a personal and power relationship? Are we tied to a situation where we are limited to what existing technology appears to allow us to do or are the rules of the software flexible enough to allow us to create new ways of seeing and experiencing beyond what was intended by the developers? In our work Temporal Chaos, we have to apply differing software understand what they can and cannot do and then stretch the rules of use to fit what we want to do. Does the resulting relationship allow for an ethics through and with the technology developed? Does each new work need to create a new relationship between the user and the technology in order to keep the ethical relationship active? By looking at the development of Temporal Chaos, we are investigating questions of how one relates to the technical tools in order to create a work that communicates across time and space in a personal way to individual visitors. To understand how we experience digital technology in general and this work, specifically, we have to ask how we will look at the relationship between technology and the user as both an ethical act and a usability issue. We will look at how the narrative has developed through its relationship with both the technology and the exhibiting institutions.

Taking care of the elderly is one of the major challenges for many societies. The percentage of world population aged 60 and over is growing including developing countries. There is increased concern over providing leisure activities and other social engagement services for the elderly. Using Internet based activities among the elderly population could help to improve their daily lifestyle and monitor their routines, leading to a healthier lifestyle. Social content and online networks have been rapidly developed in many countries, including in Iran. The Internet plays a crucial role in the access to information resources. Sources of information and other opportunities available via the Internet are increasing exponentially. In Iran there is a significant change in the percentage of elderly that has increased from 7.22% in 2006 to 8.20% in 2013, and it is estimated that 21.7% of the Iranian population will be aged 60 and above by 2050. But the number of elderly people using internet services is still low. This study examines the behavioral intention of a sample of the elderly population to use internet activities in Iran.

Research findings from Internet adoption literature are fragmentary, usually hypothesized using either the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) or The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Harmony (with lifestyle and device), perceived usefulness, and attitude are identified as the most significant drivers of intentions to adopt Internet services in developing countries. UTAUT is proposed in this research as a conceptual framework to describe the factors that may influence the elderly to use Internet services. The UTAUT model has gradually attracted researchers’ attention and recently, has been applied to explore user acceptance of Internet mobile technologies. It has been incrementally tested and applied to several technologies for both individual and organizational users within individual and multiple countries. Even though UTAUT provides an appropriate detailed model for acceptance and use of technology, it has some limitations. Therefore, The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (extending and adapting the theory to the consumer context) was developed in 2012. Insights from the literature, and discussions with the Internet providers and elderly Internet users in Iran, revealed that the existing UTAUT model is not more suitable for this country. Therefore, the UTAUT model needs to be modified to reflect that costs and access factors may influence the internet usage among the elderly population in Iran. Hence, price of services/devices, the level of education, and also knowledge transfer among users must be included. The objective of this study is to modify The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model by finding the important key factors to make the UAUT model more suitable for elderly population in Iran to use internet services. This model may influence the behavioral intention of the elderly toward using the internet and other online activities. Using the internet may change their lifestyle routines by providing leisure activities for them.
Virtual environments design assessment for the treatment of claustrophobia

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Author keywords: virtual reality, virtual environments, claustrophobia

Virtual reality exposure therapy (VRET), can help the lives of many people. Its advantages over other treatment methods for psychological disorders and more specifically phobias, like its cost effectiveness and control, make it the method that we should focus on. Claustrophobia is the phobia that we have studied. Creating suitable claustrophobic virtual environments (VEs) for patients to get immersed in, is crucial if we want to eventually treat them only with the use of VRET. We designed and developed a virtual reality (VR) framework that allows us to investigate whether VR can reproduce anxiety due to claustrophobic aspects and investigate which characteristics of the virtual environments design contribute to this. Three characteristics (space openness, tidiness and color) have been investigated through this study with our results indicating that they may affect the feeling of anxiety.